



OneRail Coalition Press Release:

Surface Transportation Legislation Moves Country Forward; OneRail Coalition Eager to Work with Congress to Make Further Improvements

July 2, 2012
Washington, DC

The OneRail Coalition congratulates both parties and both Chambers of Congress for working together to advance highway and transit reauthorization legislation which saves and creates millions of jobs by maintaining federal transportation spending at current levels. The agreement provides certainty for transportation planners by setting policy and funding levels for 27 months. In addition, the bill properly maintains the historic 80%/20% funding split between highway and transit programs.

While the agreement does not include everything that the OneRail Coalition has advocated for and does not address long-term funding challenges, it does move the country in a positive direction and provides a necessary step in a long-term process. The bill continues to focus on safety by maintaining dedicated funding for the Section 130 rail-highway grade crossing safety program, authorizes funding for the merit-based Projects of National & Regional Significance (PNRS) program, and helps leverage transportation dollars more efficiently by expanding and enhancing the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) program.

The OneRail Coalition is disappointed by the agreement's failure to provide flexibility for State DOTs to flex funding to freight rail projects when that is the most efficient option, by the lack of rail planning provisions, by the absence of improvements to the Railroad Rehabilitation & Improvement Financing (RRIF) program that had been included in both the House and Senate versions of this legislation, by the inability to restore parity for pre-tax parking and transit commuter benefits, and by the failure to modify the University Transportation Centers (UTC) Program to include the Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) in the decision making process for competitive grants.

The OneRail Coalition looks forward to working with Congress over the two year duration of this legislation to ensure that rail is included as you develop the next surface transportation authorization bill. America needs to continue to develop an efficient multi-modal transportation network with robust public and private funding.

OneRail believes that public and private investments in rail infrastructure and operations will create and maintain good domestic jobs, enhance productivity and the competitive position of the United States in the world economy, spur both near-term economic recovery and long-term prosperity, relieve road and air congestion, protect the environment, reduce our exposure to volatile gasoline prices and our dependence on imported oil, and contribute positively to public health and well-being.

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About OneRail:

OneRail is a diverse group of rail stakeholders who have come together to inform America about the benefits of a strong freight and passenger rail system. Our members include the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association (ASLRRA), Amtrak, Association of American Railroads (AAR), Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen (BRS), National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP), Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), National Railroad Construction and Maintenance Association (NRC), Railway Supply Institute (RSI), States for Passenger Rail Coalition (SPRC), Surface Transportation Policy Partnership (STPP), Sheet Metal Workers International Association (SMWIA), Transportation Communications International Union/International Association of Machinists (TCU/IAM) and the United Transportation Union (UTU).

Our growing list of Associate Supporters includes AECOM, Alstom, General Electric, HNTB, Parsons, Parsons Brinckerhoff and SYSTRA. These global companies represent the engineering and manufacturing sectors that are an essential component of private sector job creation in the transportation industry in the United States.

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